

**COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID**

**Faculty of Social Work**



**UNDERSTANDING THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON: THE ROMANIAN  
ROMA IN SWEDEN**

**COMPRENDIENDO EL FENÓMENO DE LA MIGRACIÓN: LA POBLACIÓN  
GITANA RUMANA EN SUECIA**

AUTHOR: Mihaela Camelia Albastroiu

SUPERVISOR: David Alonso González

June 2016

**ABSTRACT:** Since Romania joined the European Union (EU) in 2007, other EU member countries have started to experience an influx of migrants from Romania, specifically the Roma community. The Roma population has been a discriminated group for centuries. In Romania, their social exclusion has been related to a wide range of factors such as ethnic origin, poor living conditions, or the limited access to education and employment. These factors are not mutually exclusive and they usually come together.

This paper is aimed to describe the migration phenomenon of Romanian Romani people in Stockholm, Sweden through the eyes of the migrants themselves. The main goal is to get first-hand knowledge about the Roma community and truly understand the characteristics of their mobility process. The study is primarily based on qualitative research, which gives a clearer insight of the Romani migration. Six semi-structured interviews are supporting the bibliographical reviews.

**Keywords:** European Union, Migration, Romanian Roma community, Social exclusion, Sweden.

**RESUMEN:** Desde que Rumanía entró en la Unión Europea (UE) en el año 2007, los demás países europeos han empezado a experimentar una afluencia de inmigrantes desde Rumanía, en concreto los roma o romaní. La población romaní es un grupo discriminado desde hace siglos. En Rumanía, su exclusión social ha sido relacionada con una gran variedad de factores tales como el origen étnico, las precarias condiciones de vida, el acceso limitado a la educación y al empleo. Dichos factores no son excluyentes entre sí y normalmente aparecen juntos.

El presente trabajo tiene como objeto describir el fenómeno de la migración de la población gitana rumana en Suecia, Estocolmo a través de las experiencias de los mismos emigrantes. El objetivo central es conocer y entender de primera mano las características de este proceso de movilidad. El estudio está basado principalmente en la metodología cualitativa que ofrece una profunda comprensión sobre la migración de los Roma. Seis entrevistas semiestructuradas complementan las búsquedas bibliográficas.

**Palabras claves:** Exclusión social, Migración, Población gitana rumana, Suecia, Unión Europea.

***"Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists."***

***Franklin D. Roosevelt***

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CoE	Council of Europe
EC	European Commission
ERRC	European Roma Rights Center
EU	European Union
EU-citizen	A person who holds the nationality of an EU country
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
INS	National Institute of Statistics of Romania
NEM	New economics theory of migration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SFI	Swedish for Immigrants

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>2. THE AIM OF THE STUDY</b> .....	2
<b>3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	2
3.1. Current situation.....	2
3.2. Theories of migration.....	6
3.2.1. Theories of initiation of migration.....	6
3.2.2. Theories of continuation of migration.....	8
3.3. The Swedish integration model.....	8
<b>4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH</b> .....	10
<b>5. ANALYSIS</b> .....	12
5.1. Romanian Roma socio-economic backgrounds.....	12
5.1.1. Housing.....	12
5.1.2. Education and Literacy.....	13
5.1.3. Employment and Income.....	15
5.2. The Migration Route.....	16
5.2.1. From Italy and Spain, to Sweden.....	16
5.2.2. The livelihood Strategies in Sweden.....	17
5.2.3. The Migration 's Experience and Future Plans.....	19
<b>6. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	20
<b>7. REFERENCES</b> .....	22

### ATTACHMENTS

I. Survey carried out among Romanian Roma migrants, in Sweden

II. Quantitative Data Obtained Through the Survey

## **1. Introduction**

Every day, thousands and thousands of people decide to migrate to other countries in pursuit of a better life. No matter where you live, it is impossible not to read or hear in the media about the movement of migrants. In particular, the Romanian Romani migration is a debated topic in Sweden and in the rest of Europe, since Romania became a Member State of the European Union (EU). Italy and Spain were two of the most popular destinations for this community (Djuve, 2015a).

The Romanian Romani community and their unique culture have made their presence felt across the globe. From the first time I set foot in Sweden, I noticed their presence in the streets of Stockholm.

As a Romanian migrant in Sweden, with a permanent residence in Spain, and studying social work, I was highly motivated to explore the reasons of migration of this group. Their activities to earn money such as begging, selling social magazines, or singing, were not new to me. I used to see them doing the same in Spain. It was in that moment when I started to wonder more about this issue. Questions such as: What are the determining factors to migrate from Romania to Sweden? Or, how many countries have they been to before? Those were the kind of questions I had on my mind.

Therefore, I started dealing with the Roma community for five months in Stockholm city. My practical training at *Crossroads-Stockholms Stadsmision*, one of the biggest NGO's in Sweden, and my collaboration with SOS Children's Villages, allowed me to immerse myself in the Roma culture. My daily mingle time with them through social interactions, helped me build the trust and confidence needed to obtain high-quality information.

This final assignment is mainly focused on a qualitative approach. It aims to explain the migration process of Romania's Romani people to Sweden and understand its patterns, through the eyes of the migrants themselves (Corbetta, 2013). In order to be able to do that, I have carried out a bibliographical review of their backgrounds, followed by the analysis of semi-structured interviews made to Romanian Romani migrants in Sweden.

## **2. The aim of the study**

The purpose of this study is to understand the migration process of the Romanian Romani community in Sweden, through the eyes of the migrants themselves (Corbetta, 2013).

To this end, several specific aims have been set focused on analyzing: their socio-economic conditions in Romania; the reasons for leaving their country and choosing Sweden; previous migration experiences; family ties, livelihood strategies in Sweden, and earnings.

## **3. Theoretical framework**

### 3.1. Current situation

Romani people are characterized for being nomadic. For decades, they have been moving within their own countries of origin and outside of them (Macías, 2008). Sources estimate that there are between 10 and 12 million Roma people in Europe and they represent the biggest recognized minority. Around 6 million of them live in the EU and most of them are EU-citizens (EC, 2016).

In Europe, there are several studies and reports that approach the Roma migration and in particular the Romanian Roma movement.

Hence, Swedish authorities studied the matter thoroughly and described the Romanian Roma's migration as scarce. Still, authors such as Djuve (2015), Gaga (2015), Friberg (2015), Horgen (2015), Tyldum (2015) and Zhang (2015) are moving towards this phenomenon by providing more visibility. This paucity of studies is due to the fact that the Roma community is not a population "(...) easy to reach by means of conventional survey methods" (Djuve, 2015a, p.5) and their movement to Sweden is still a recent phenomenon (Friberg, 2015).

Before coming to Sweden, they already had other migration experiences within EU countries, choosing for example, Italy and Spain as two of the most popular destinations (Djuve, 2015a). This constant migration together with "(...) the lack of data on the basis of the ethnicity and race" (Macías,

2008, p.59) makes it difficult to quantify the number of Romani people for each EU-country.

As Table 1 shows, in Sweden as well as in Spain and Italy, no official statistics based on people ethnic's origins are available. The Romanian National Institute of Statistics (INS, 2011) registers its population on the basis of freedom of choice to declare or not himself as part of the Roma community.

Table 1.  
Roma in EU-countries

EU Country	Total population (World Bank 2010)	Census year	Official number (Self-declared)	Maximum & minimum estimate
Romania	21.442.012	2011	619.007	1.200.000-2.500.000
Sweden	9.379.116	-	No data available	35.000-65.000
Spain	40.081.574	-	No data available	500.000-1.000.000
Italy	60.483.521	-	No data available	120.000-180.000

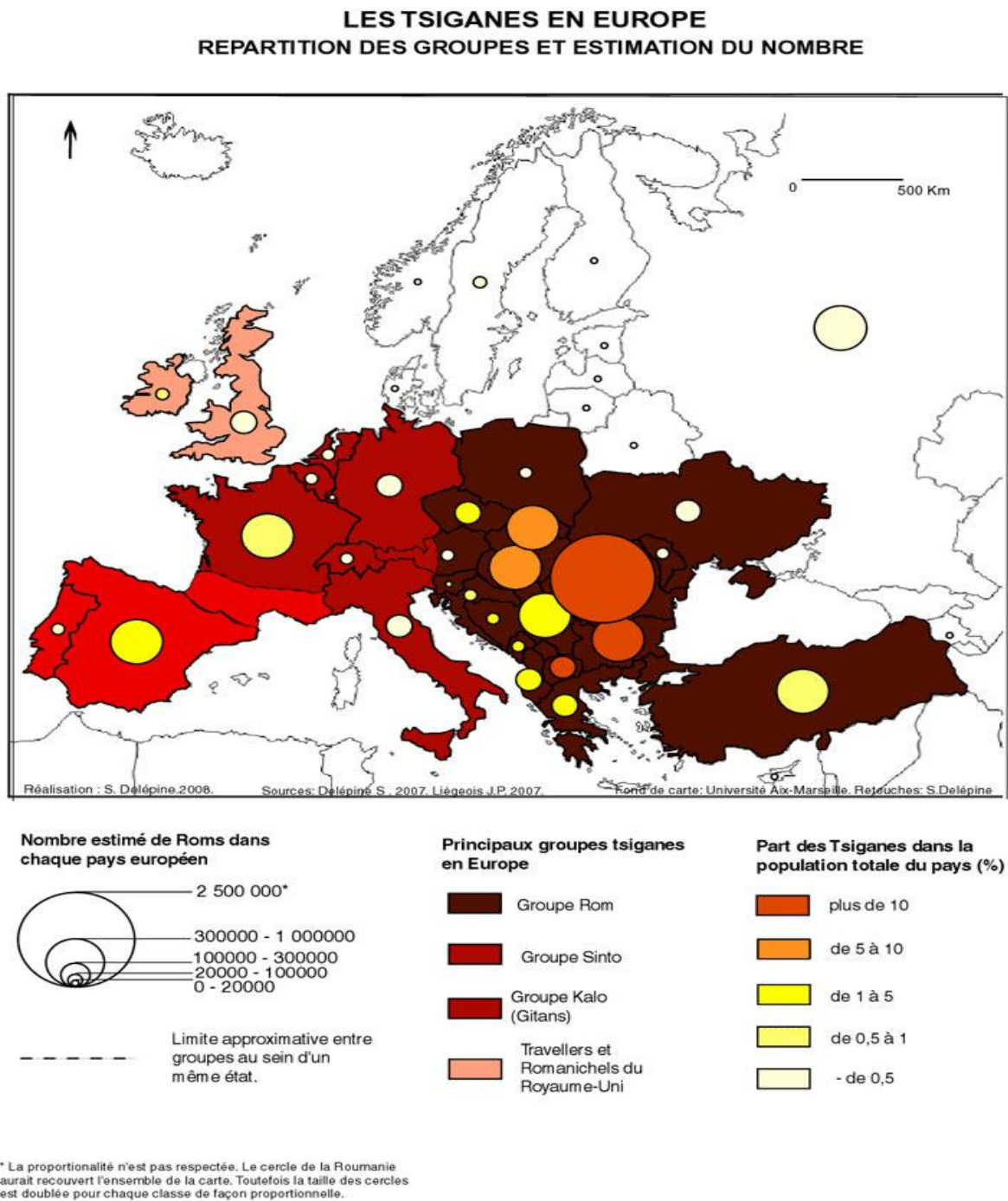
Source: own formulation based on Council of Europe (CoE, 2012)

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) the term "Roma" refers to an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as "(...) Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers a wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies" (CoE, 2012, p.4).

The map below (see Figure 1), includes local Roma people, related groups, and Roma migrants (CoE,2012). Since most people feared to be discriminated with the negative connotation of the word "Roma", it made them not want to declare themselves as belonging to this ethnic group.

However, different sources, including unofficial estimates such as the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC, 2011/2012), affirmed that the number of Romani people was up to 4–5 times higher, as shown in Figure 1, according to which there would be around 2 million of them in Romania.

Figure1.  
Roma in Europe



\*The principle of proportionality is not respected. Romania's circle would cover the whole map.

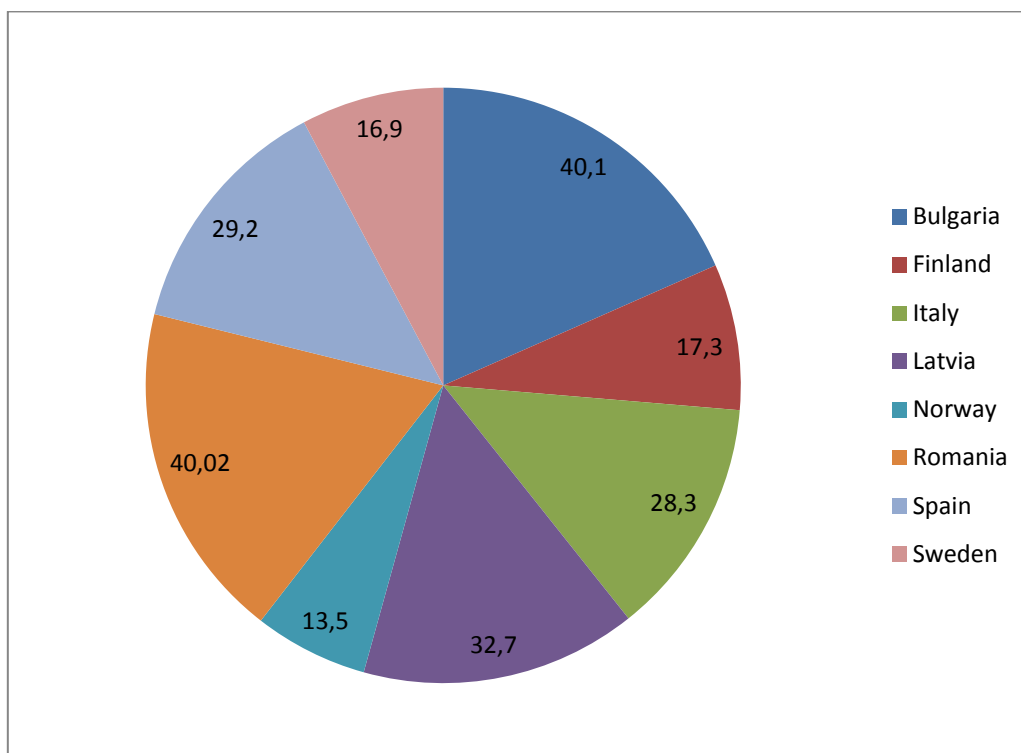
Source: S., Delphine. Aix-Marseille University, 2007. In Camargo, 2009.

Within the EU, Romania has the second highest percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. A 40.02% of its citizens (Eurostat, 2014) are at risk of falling into such situation. Only Bulgaria and Latvia hold the first place of their inhabitants in poverty with 40.1% and 32.7% respectively (Eurostat, 2014).

The Figure 2 provides information about several EU-countries and their risk of poverty and social exclusion. It is possible to observe that Sweden, together with a few other countries, has the lowest percentage of citizens at risk of poverty, with only 16.9% of its population (Eurostat, 2014).

Figure 2.

People from different EU-countries at risk of poverty or social exclusion (%).



Source: own formulation based on data from Eurostat (2014)

However, in Romania and almost in all EU countries, the most affected by poverty are Roma people (Tarvnovschi, 2011) and most of them are trying to escape this situation by crossing the borders. Their constant relocation between different countries can be explained through the theories of migration and the model of integration for immigrants in Sweden.

### 3.2. Theories of migration

Nowadays, the migration is mostly defined as "(...) a move from one place in order to go and live in another place for a continuous period of at least one year" (European Commission, 2000, p. xiv). However, Ravenstein developed the first concept in 1885 (Enache, 2010). He set out guiding principles and laws to explain the causes of migration, and was the first author to implicitly use the push and pull factors. For him, the root cause was in economic inequalities between home countries and destination countries (León, 2005).

After Ravenstein, other authors (see e.g. Piore, 1979; Stark & Bloom, 1985; Portes & Böröcz, 1989; Bauer & Zimmermann, 1999; Massey et al., 1993; Kurekova, 2011) have reviewed the existing theories and models and have tried to explain migration and its factors by keeping the same push and pull migration mechanism (Enache, 2010; EC, 2000).

The theories of migration can be divided in two categories: theories which explain the initiation of migration (Massey et al., 1993) and theories which explain "(...) why the migration continues once it has started" (EC, 2000, p. 3).

#### 3.2.1. Theories of initiation of migration

According to Kurekova (2011), the most common theories of economic migration are: push and pull factors theory, neoclassical economic theories (macro and micro), new economic theory of migration (NEM), dual labour market theory and world system theory.

The push and pull factors theory is implicit in the economic theories of migration (EC, 2000). In its most limited form, the push-pull theory consists in a number of unfavourable conditions in a country that push people to move away in combination with positive opportunities, or pull factors in another country, which attract people. The pushing factors can include elements such as "(...) economic, social and political hardship" (EC, 2000, p. 3). The combination of two of these factors determines the size and the direction of the migration flows (Portes & Böröcz, 1989).

Generally speaking, neoclassical theories (macro and micro) focus on "(...) differential wages and employment conditions" between different countries and on the cost of migration (Massey et al., 1993, p. 432). According to these theories, the Romanian Roma movement is an individual decision with the main goal of maximizing incomes.

The neoclassical macro theory focused completely on labour markets affirming that wages differentials resulted from differences in the ratio of labour to capital, causing the migration of workers from low-wage countries to others with high wage (Bauer & Zimmermann, 1999). The main variables involved in the migration of Romania's Roma people, are the wage rates from the home country and the host country.

On the other hand, the neoclassical micro theory focuses its attention on labour markets but assuming the Roma migrants cost-benefit calculation not only when they have to decide if they are going to migrate, but also when they consider other destination countries (EC, 2000). According to Kurekova (2011), in this model not only the variables regarding earnings are taken into account, but also the probability of finding work together with Roma people individual skills such as experience, language and so on.

The NEM is a challenge to the assumptions of neoclassical theories (Stark & Bloom, 1985). The key perspective of the NEM is that "(...) migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors" (Massey et al., 1993 p. 436) but rather families and the householders are also decision-makers. According to this theory, the main goal of Romanian Roma migrants it would be not only maximising their incomes but also minimising risks. The variables involved in this approach are both individual and households characteristics (EC, 2000).

The emphasis of dual labour market theory and world system theory to explain the migration process is more on the migration countries' pull factors than on the unfavourable conditions in their home country. For the dual labour market theory, labour demands in the host countries are the base of migration (Piore, 1979). On the other hand, the world system theory shows that migration is a "(...) natural outgrowth of the disruptions

and dislocations", which occurs in capitalist movement and can be observed through time (Kurekova, 2011, p.9).

### 3.2.2. Theories of continuation of migration

Network theory gives Roma migrant's families and friendship networks, a key role in the migration process. Those ties play a substantial part in their lives in the home country as well as in the host country, because they are a guarantee for their future economic and social stability in the country of migration (Massey, 1990).

The institutional theory highlights the support of private institutions and voluntary organizations to the Romanian Roma community once migration has begun (Massey et.al, 1993). As the number of migrates grow, more organizations appear, increasing the "(...) impact on the maintenance of migration flows" (León,2005, p.72).

Lastly, the theory of cumulative causation explains how "(...) the migration process alters circumstances both at origin and at destination" (EC, 2000). According to León (2005), the migration experience alters perceptions and motivations in such a way that it stimulates additional migration.

### 3.3. The Swedish integration model

Beyond the explanations that theories of migrations can give to understand the Romanian Roma migration process, the Swedish model of integration of immigrants is giving even more knowledge about this mobility.

Sweden was one of the first countries to have set a trailblazing in the immigrants' integration. Its measures are aimed to promote the socio-economic inclusion and independence of immigrants in a society based on the principle of diversity (Wiesbrock, 2011). Even if none of the countries can be categorized strictly under one of integration models, Sweden's emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity, stand in opposition to the assimilationist model of others European countries such as Italy, France, Germany or Spain (Wiesbrock, 2011).

The Swedish policies based on "the existence of rights, duties and opportunities for all members of society" and "the importance to combat

racism and ethnic discrimination", are clearly a pulling factor for Romania's Roma migrants (Wiesbrock, 2011, p.50).

According to Wiesbrock (2011), the main characteristics of integration policies in Sweden are: voluntary participation in integration measures, orientated employment, decentralization and naturalization.

Almost in all Western European countries, mandatory courses or tests for integration have been introduced in the last years. The non-compliance of those conditions or the failure of tests, bring with them harsh consequences during the integration. In Sweden, "(...) the immigrants have the right to receive free instructions" in Swedish, but they are not obliged to participate (Wiesbrock, 2011, p.52). The provision of free language tuition has on its roots the principle that everyone should have the right to learn Swedish as his/her own language (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2007, in Wiesbrock, 2011). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014), learning the host-country language is a key factor on the path towards integration.

The provision of Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) is a mandatory component of the integration measures plan, and is coordinated by the public employment service (OECD, 2014). The SFI is giving the opportunity to several immigrants to learn how to read and write in Swedish. In 2009 and 2010 was introduced a language test, which included financial incentives for immigrants who passed in 12 months a Swedish language course as well as civic orientation (Wiesbrock, 2011). Even so, passing the language test or the non-compliance with the integration plan, are not prerequisites to access to permanent residence rights.

Perhaps, not many Romanian Roma people take advantage of this chance because of their illiteracy; however, this integration measure can still make the mobility process easier and facilitate the process to find a job.

The orientated employment is another part of the integration programme. The new arrivals have to set an introduction plan with the Public Employment Service in which the municipalities are also involved (Wiesbrock, 2011). This introduction programme has a person in charge of

giving support to migrants to look for a job, advising in social matters, career guidance and so on (OECD, 2014). According to Wiesbrock (2011), at the end of this introduction programme, the migrants are considered to be available for the labour market as native Swedes.

The decentralised integration policies are clearly a characteristic of the Swedish integration model. The main responsibility was laid on the municipalities until the 1<sup>st</sup> of December of 2010, when the Swedish Employment Service took over the responsibility for the introductory measures (Wiesbrock, 2011).

In general, naturalization in Sweden is possible only for migrants with identity documentation, permanent residence permit, reside in the country for five years, and good conduct (OECD, 2014). In addition to this "liberal naturalization regime" (Wiesbrock, 2011, p.56), the law in Sweden is in favour of dual nationality. The main reasons for this law are based on "(...) the emphasis of multiculturalism of Swedish policies" (Wiesbrock, 2011, p.57).

#### **4. Methodology and research**

The primary objective of this study is to perceive the main characteristics of the migration process of the Romanian Roma community in Sweden. A comprehensive bibliographical review has been carried out for a good understanding of the current social context. The Internet was a boundless source of information and research findings. Documentary databases such as "ProQuest Social Sciences" from Stockholm University and Dialnet from Complutense University, together with several data statistical reports and recent researches about Roma's migration have helped to explore the subsurface of this phenomenon.

This study is principally based on qualitative approach supported by six non-directive and semi-structured interviews carried out during an internship in Stockholm in autumn of 2015. The primary data was collected in the project "*Migranternas barn*", developed by SOS Children's Village with personal inputs as well (See Attachment No.I and No.II). The qualitative methodology is used because the study is not trying to generalize and it

strives to "(...) describe and explain social phenomena from the discourse" (Rubio & Varas, 2011, p. 247). These interviews were selected from thirty others. The number of persons interviewed was not fixed from the beginning. Interviews were made until a saturation point was reached (Bertaux, 1993 in Rubio & Varas, 2011).

The interviews consisted of four main blocks of questions: the living conditions in Romania and Sweden, the livelihood strategies (occupations and jobs); education; migration and family networks.

The main reason of using the qualitative interviews is to understand the migrant's perceptions, their feelings and the reasons for their actions (Corbetta, 2003). The snowball technique was used to find the research subjects and to conduct this qualitative study through the interviews (Atkinson & Flint, 2001).

The interviewees were informed about the objective of the research and their anonymity, the reason they were chosen, and the type of questions that were to be asked (Corbetta, 2013). The interviews were digitally recorded, with previous agreement, in Romanian, the mother tongue of the participants. Afterwards, they were translated, transcribed into English and marked with a letter and a number I1, I2, I3... I6.

In order to maintain gender equality, three men and three women were interviewed for this study. They were previously selected according to a predefined sample profile following the guidelines of Djuve, Horgen, Tyldum, and Zhang (2015).

The characteristics of the interviewed are:

- Romanian Roma person between 18-40 years, who has migrated to Italy and Spain, after their home country accession to the EU, and prior to their arrival in Sweden, Stockholm. For a better understanding of Romanian Roma migration in Sweden, it is compulsory to widely understand this process.

- Homeless Romanian Roma person. The participants for this study do not have a stable place to live in Stockholm.

-Officially unemployed. Includes a Romanian Roma person who does not have a formal job in Stockholm.

-With minor children in Romania. More than half of the Roma migrants have come to Stockholm without their children under eighteen (Djuve, 2015b).

## **5. Analysis**

### 5.1. Romanian Roma socio-economic backgrounds

#### 5.1.1. Housing

The migration process from Romania to Sweden cannot be understood without "(...) taking a closer look at the migrants' living conditions and opportunities" in their home country (Djuve, 2015a, p.33).

Having a shelter is an essential good for a better living and the housing situations for many Roma people "(...) are in need of improvement" (Friberg, 2015, p.18). The Roma people in Sweden are not necessarily homeless in their country (Gaga, 2015) but they lack the "modern facilities such as clean water, bathrooms and heating" (Djuve, 2015a, p.38).

"My wife and I have five children...we are living with my mother at her house...it's a small house with two bedrooms...we don't have electricity or hot water [...] but what shall we do? We don't have anything else...That's why we left..."[I2]

The impossibility to secure a household and good family conditions represent both a push and a pull factor. The migrants interviewed claim poor living conditions at home in Romania. They may have access to housing, whether they own it or rented it, but they usually live in overcrowded houses with their closest relatives:

"I came to Sweden to have the opportunity to buy something... I'm living in my mother-in-law's house...and...we are many there."[I4]

"In Romania...I live with my mother-in-law...well...we are more families...my wife and I...our children...I mean, her

children and mine...they sleep with my mother-in-law...and...my sister-in-law is living also there... with her husband and their children...because they have 2 children as well...and we have 4 rooms.”[I1]

According to Palvarini (2012), these poor housing conditions “not only represent significant barriers to any path of social inclusion, but often constitute a denial of fundamental rights of citizenship” (Palvarini, 2012, p.54).

#### 5.1.2. Education and literacy

In Romania, official data is missing with regards to Roma people participation in education, since the Ministry of Education does not collect and publishes data based on children's ethnicity (Tarnovshi, 2011). However, the research shows that negative factors such as “(...) poverty, segregation, discrimination and the lack of support have an adverse impact on education area” (Tarnovschi, 2011, p.36). Therefore, the illiteracy among Roma people over sixteen years of age continues to be a problem nowadays. Amongst adults, 25% of them don't know how to read or write (Tarnovschi, 2011).

Generally speaking, the Romanian Roma population in Sweden are not “(...) highly educated” (Djuve, 2015a, p.40). They have never been to school and some of them express their desire to learn now as well as their remorse:

“We must sacrifice ourselves for our children...if they go to school, they will learn to write and read and they will have a future...not like us [...] I have never been to school...I wish I knew to read and write.” [I3]

“I would have liked to go to school to learn to read and write because now I want to get my driving license and I cannot...but if you open the alphabetization course for us, I will come.” [I1]

Only two of the informants affirmed that they knew to read a little bit but with lots of difficulties. The learning has taken place during their lifetime

from friends or big brothers and sisters. In general, women had to leave school to do household chores.

“I know to read a little bit...but only letter by letter...and it costs me a lot of effort when I have to read a big word...[...] I have learned from others gradually and for necessity.” [I5]

“I have never been to school, but my big brother did...I was learning from him a little bit...I also know to write a little bit...but of course not like you...I stayed at home to help my mother with household chores. ” [I6]

The Romanian Roma people are aware of their lack of education and how this influences negatively on their opportunities to get a formal job. In addition to the other circumstances, this element is one of the essential push and pull factors related to their decision to emigrate (Djuve, 2015a).

“In Romania no one would give us a job because we don't have any studies...and...if I don't go begging here, my children and I won't have anything to eat...now it is too late for us...too late...” [I4]

“[...]...Now, I don't have time to learn...I have to work (beg)...my time has passed and this is the only job where I don't need to have studies. ” [I6]

Even if they couldn't have the opportunity to go to school, the Roma populations give primary importance to their children's school enrolment. They believe that their children “will have a better life if they get an education” (Djuve, 2015a, p.126). Most of them affirmed that they left to be able to offer a future for their sons and daughters.

“My son asks me to bring him here during the holidays...but I told him...until you're not finished with your studies you cannot come...he wants to get his driving license...but I told him...no way until you finish.”[I6]

### 5.1.3. Employment and income

Access for the Roma community to the formal labour market in their home country has been in continuous deterioration. After the Communist regime was overthrown in late 1989, most of the Roma people lost their formal employment. This used to be the norm for Roma men, and finding a new one, was extremely difficult (Djuve, 2015b). The interweaved Roma community doesn't have any formal work experience, except their elderly relatives who were working during the communism.

"I have never worked in Romania...I read cards and palms to people...(she is laughing)...I also sold iron...that is how we survived. My father was the only one who had a formal job when Ceaușescu was living...he worked in the cement factory..."[I3]

"My mother is the only one who has a pension...from my father...because he was working...but I have never worked...sometimes I helped friends by doing duties as a bricklayer and my wife was taking care of our household" [I5].

According to Djuve (2015a), 82% of the Roma migrants in Stockholm, Sweden have never had a formal employment and their work experience in Romania or abroad, is almost restricted to informal jobs. Again, their lack of education and professional qualification were described as the main reasons for not having employments in Romania and as pushing factors for migration.

"In Romania I have never worked because I don't have any profession...I don't have studies...I used to have a horse and a chariot and I collected iron from the garbage" [I1].

The income sources in which Roma households rely are "remittances from abroad, casual day labour, child benefits and social assistance" (Djuve, p.47, 2015b). In Romania, only 21% of newly employed people can be considered as Roma (Friberg, 2015), the rest make their income from work in the informal labour market. This situation is still a pending matter and a big challenge on which Romania has to work.

## 5.2. The migration route

### 5.2.1. From Italy and Spain, to Sweden

Italy and Spain are well known as countries of emigration. They became countries of immigration at the beginning of the '80 (Vlase & Preoteasa, 2012). A previous migration experience is a real fact in the life of the Romanian Roma community. Italy and Spain were two of the most popular destination countries amongst the ones we interviewed (Djuve, 2015b). Roma people from Romania have migrated towards this two EU-countries in order "to enhance the quality of life of their family" (Vlase & Preoteasa, 2012, p.66).

The families and the networks play a fundamental role in the migration process from the beginning. According to the theory of new economics of labour market of Stark & Bloom (1985), migration decisions are determined by families and households, not only by individuals. Family members have a big responsibility also after the departure. Within Roma migrants in Stockholm, 77% of them have minor children, and with very few exceptions they remain in Romania taking care of their grandparents (Djuve, 2015a). Family ties are so strong that Roma migrants "have confidence that their children feel loved and cared" even while they are abroad (Djuve, 2015c, p. 117).

"My children were left at home with my mother...and I...I'm already doing a huge sacrifice for them so they are able to go to school...to assure everything that they need...the oldest one loves to go to school and he's smart...both of them know to read and write."[I3]

The better living conditions from Italy and Spain allow Roma migrants to take the children with them. The earned money is used for their clothes, shoes, and school materials (Djuve, 2015b).

"I left for them...to be able to pay for their school materials, because they have to go to school...not like me...they have to study and build a better future for themselves...if they need anything I have to assure it...that's why I'm here...In

Italy I have had it with me...there they have to go school"  
[I4]

### 5.2.2. The livelihood strategies in Sweden

Roma people have always shown high adaptation capacities to establish themselves under the most difficult living conditions (Gamella, 2007). Local policies influence them to choose the income strategies and the destination countries (Djuve, 2015b). In Sweden, most of them are sleeping outdoors, in tents or in cars.

"We sleep in the woods, in tents...we are more people there...My wife and I have purchased a tent from Decathlon and we have several blankets which we have brought from Romania or people gave us here..." [I2]

"There are a lot of snakes...you know, last summer I was so close to death...I woke up and there was a snake...close to where I sleep...and when it rains we get wet and our tent is always falling down...after that is so hard to dry out everything...when winter is coming..." [I4]

Apart from the obvious discomfort of sleeping uncomfortably, there are several negative factors that make this situation more difficult (Tyldum, 2015). Not having access to the ordinary social services makes them dependent on NGOs and benevolent Swedes that provide them with a warm meal, or allow them to wash their clothes and have a shower (Tyldum, 2015). Those organizations and the individuals, attempt to heal some of the hardships faced by the Romanian Roma migrants.

"We came here to have a warm meal...and so we can shower...and wash our clothes...I haven't had a shower since last week...because if we come too often, we lose money...so...in winter they give us also clothes...you don't know how cold it can be." [I3]

“I knew an elderly lady who was so nice with me...she helped me a lot...last Winter she allowed me and my sister-in-law and my brother to sleep in her house...for almost five months...and now, sometimes I go and cook at her house when we need to.” [I6]

According to the ERRC (2011/2012), Romanian Roma migrate to other EU countries to find new and better opportunities, specifically, employment opportunities. Ultimately, migration and begging are considered economic activities and Roma migrants in Sweden are principally associated with begging on the streets (Horgen, 2015). In Stockholm, most of them, apart from that, combine different activities: collecting bottles, selling social magazine or skirts, singing or dancing are other income sources (Horgen, 2015). The beggars are mainly sitting on the metro and train stations, and at markets exits.

“When I'm not begging, my husband and I collect bottles for recycling and then we take them to Lidl [...] when there is a party, people throw a lot of bottles and cans, then we make more money.” [I4]

“I’m not up for begging because the winter is cold here...but I make money by selling traditional Roma skirts. My mother sends me boxes with our typical skirts and shoes and I sell everything among women.”[I6]

The presence of women is the key of the process of emigration since there is some of them who are taking care of the house in general, the family and their members (Gamella, 2007) and sometimes women complain.

“Thank God I have two boys...you know how tough is to be a woman in this world...you have to do everything.” [I6]

All the domestic tasks are women’s responsibility while the economic decisions and those with regards to the job of each one, are in men's hands

(Gamella, 2007). Gender differences over work are also visible in their speech because “women are more likely to beg than men” (Horgen, 2015, p.59).

“My wife and my sister-in-law beg...I used to beg before but you know...who is going to give me money? I´m a man and people say that men should figure out their life and find a job, not beg.” [I5]

“You know...a woman is a woman, they feel more pain for her than for a man, and she can make more money. She's begging and I´m looking more after plastic bottles to collect and after that I sell them.” [I1]

The interviewed Roma people have disclosed their main strategy to confront the living conditions in this cold country, how they are generating permanent incomes, and not being away from their households too much time. Most of the families leave at home their relatives and after some months, they go home and switch with the other person. This way, the family is still receiving money and they don´t lose the assigned place for begging.

### 5.2.3. The migration´s experience and future plans

The Roma migrant´s route, doesn´t suggest that they don´t prefer to migrate to one country than other. All interviewed agreed that migrating to Sweden has been a better experience than in Spain and Italy. The main reason is still the big opportunity of earning income.

“Here, in Sweden we make more money... [...] it is better than Spain and Italy...here you can find more good people that give us more money...” [I2]

“In Italy we also made money but not like here...here for example I have an old friend who saw that I begged for hours and sometimes she gives me not only money, but also food or clothes for my children.” [I6]

The Roma migrants express interest in returning in Stockholm, after their next visit to Romania, despite the extreme living conditions. Until their set target has not been achieved, they will still migrate. According to Djuve (2015c) the intention to return is also related to "how successful people are as migrants" (p.131).

"I´m going back to Romania only on Christmas and Easter...here we are suffering but what shall we do? Going back forever in Romania? We are better here...we have something to eat, we earn money and we can also send a part of it to our children and family ..."[I4]

The migration amongst Romanian Roma people seems to be a permanent and a temporary practice; many of those migrants spend a good part of the year travelling between Sweden and Romania. According to them, migration is positive for their children´s education, their future and for the whole family.

"Everywhere is better than in Romania...there is nothing to do in Romania...if things go wrong...we will have to find another way of living abroad...We´ll still go around till I finish my house." [I5]

"I will still stay here a few more years...until my children are older and they can look after themselves...the Romanian Government doesn't help us with anything...what kind of job are they supposed to give us if we have no studies? ...If they expel me from here...I will find another country." [I3]

## **6. Drawing conclusions**

Nowadays, the increasing migration of the Romanian Roma population in Sweden has become a vital topic in the mass media and a major subject of political debates. The aim of this study is not to come up with solutions about this process, neither to generalize, but rather to deeply understand this issue from the people involved. According to the study, the majority of Romanian Roma people had previous migration experience before coming to Sweden and the most popular countries where they migrated to were Italy and Spain.

Migration could not be possible without family members and social networks, which play an important role on the process. Previous to their departure, the Romanian Roma migrants have already friends or relatives in Sweden, as well as in previous migration countries. In addition, their family is an important pillar at home; the majority of children are left in Romania in the care of their relatives, specifically their grandparents.

The flow of Roma migrants in Sweden can be explained from the theories of migration and the point of view of the Swedish model of integration. However, it is obvious that the complexity of this issue cannot be explained only from one side. The study agrees with the bibliographical reviews on the main reasons for leaving their home country. The theory of push and pull factors is the most common of the theories and it indicates the negative elements which determine the migration decision; Romanian Roma people are poor, live in harsh housing condition, and are left out from the formal labour market at home and in Sweden.

Each one of the theories has been criticized and all of them have advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, the Swedish model of integration is not well thought and adapted to Roma people since most of them don't know how to read or write, and they have never had a formal job before. Even if a greater number of Romanian Roma people were illiterate and there were aware about the difficulties it causes, all their children would go to school.

The main activities for earning money in Sweden are begging, collecting plastic bottles, selling social magazines or singing. Even if those "jobs" are performed by both genders, women are more likely to beg than men. The incomes are mostly spent on buying a house or sent at home for children's clothes and school expenses.

The study reaches agreement with the main literature that migration between Romanian Roma people is both permanent and temporary. Roma migrants travel during their stays between Romania and Sweden, and switch their "job" with their relatives, making optimum use of the available resources to generate incomes for their households.

Last but not least, this paper has described migrants' experience and gave voice to their future plans. All of them made a positive evaluation of their migration experience in spite of the harsh living conditions in Sweden.

## 7. References

- Atkinson, R., & Flint, J. (2001). Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball strategies. *Social Research Update*, 33. Retrieved from: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU33.html>
- Bauer, T. & Zimmermann, K. F. (1999). *Assessment of possible migration pressure and its labor market impact following EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe. Research Report, No.3.* [http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/reports/report\\_pdfs/iza\\_report\\_03.pdf](http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/reports/report_pdfs/iza_report_03.pdf)
- Camargo Rodríguez, A.P. (2009). Del Este al Oeste: dinámica de las migraciones internacionales roma/gitanas en Europa occidental. El caso franco-rumano durante el periodo 2002-2008 (Degree's Thesis). Universidad Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. Colombia. Retrieved from: <http://repository.urosario.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10336/1586/Migraciones%20Roma.pdf?sequence=1>
- Corbetta P. (2003). *Social Research: Theory, Methods and Techniques.* Oxford, UK: The Alden Press.
- Council of Europe (2012). Descriptive Glossary of terms relating to Roma issues". Brussels: Council of Europe. <http://a.cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/documents/Glossary%20Roma%20EN%20version%2018%20May%202012.pdf>
- Djuve, A.B., Horgen, F.J, Tyldum, G. & Zhang, H. (2015). When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals. Oslo: The Rockwool Foundation.
- Djuve, A.B. (2015). Worlds apart: The migrants' living conditions in Romania. In Djuve, A.B., Horgen, F.J., Tyldum, G., & Zhang, H. (2015). *When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals* (pp.33-53). Oslo: The Rockwool Foundation. (a)

- Djuve, A.B. (2015). Social remittance and community. In Djuve, A.B., Horgen, F.J., Tyldum, G., & Zhang, H. (2015). *When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals* (pp.109-125). Oslo: The Rockwool Foundation. (b)
- Djuve, A.B. (2015). Temporary or permanent? In Djuve, A.B., Horgen, F.J., Tyldum, G., & Zhang, H. (2015). *When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals* (pp.129-136). Oslo: The Rockwool Foundation. (c).
- Enache, A.L. (2010). *The recent migration of the Romanian Roma to Finland* (Master's thesis). Diaconia University of Applied Science, Finland. Retrieved from: <http://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/15052>
- European Roma Rights Center (2011/2012). *Romania-a report by the European Roma Centre. Country profile 2011-2012*. Retrieved from: <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/romania-country-profile-2011-2012.pdf>
- European Commission (2000). *Push and Pull Factors of International Migration. A Comparative Report*. Luxemburg: Office for Official Publication of the European Communities. Retrieved from: <https://www.nidi.nl/shared/content/output/2000/eurostat-2000-theme1-pushpull.pdf>
- Eurostat (2014). *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion*. Retrieved from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tsdsc100&language=en>
- Friberg, O. (2015). *God has forgotten about us Roma-A qualitative study of the Romanian Roma migration to Sweden and the migration as a political action* (Master`s thesis). Malmö University. Sweden. Retrieved from: <https://dspace.mah.se/handle/2043/19245>
- Gaga, D.F. (2015). *This money begged here is paid with blood-A qualitative study of the Romanian beggars` perceptions on their health status before and during begging, and their health maintaining strategies in Uppsala* (Master's thesis). Uppsala University. Sweden. Retrieved

from:<http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:857977/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Gamella, J. (2007). La inmigración ignorada: Roma/gitanos de Europa oriental en España, 1991-2006. *Gazeta de Antropología* (23). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10481/6990>

Horgen, F.J. (2015). Street work as a livelihood strategy. In A. B. Djuve, A. F. J. Horgen, G. Tyldum, G., & H. Zhang, When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals (pp.55-67). Oslo: The Rockwool Foundation.

INS (2011). Recesământul locuintelor și al populației. Demers statistic de importanță strategic pentru România. București: Institutul Național de Statistică.

Kurekova, L. (Apr, 2011). Theories of migration: Conceptual review and empirical testing in the context of the EU East-West flows. Paper presented to Interdisciplinary conference on Migration: Economic Change, Social Change, University College, London.

León Micolta, A. (2005). Teorías y conceptos asociados al estudio de las migraciones internacionales. *Trabajo social* (7), 67-73. Retrieved from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=4391739>

Macías León, A. (2008). Migraciones de los roma/gitanos de Rumanía. *Gitanos: Pensamiento Y Cultura*(45-46), 58-63. Retrieved from: [https://www.gitanos.org/upload/39/30/45\\_46AFondo.pdf](https://www.gitanos.org/upload/39/30/45_46AFondo.pdf)

Massey, D.S., Arango, J., Graeme, H., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A. & Taylor, J.E. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 19, pp.431-466.

OECD (2014). *Finding the way: a discussion of the Swedish migrant integration system*. Paris: OECD .Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/migration/swedish-migrant-integration-system.pdf>

- Palvarini, P. (2012). Roma Population and housing conditions. In D. Tarnovschi (Ed.), *Roma from Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain between Social Inclusion and Migration: comparative study* (pp.54-64). Bucharest: Soros Foundation. Retrieved from: [https://www.gitanos.org/upload/19/58/Roma\\_in\\_Romania\\_\\_Bulgaria\\_\\_Italy\\_and\\_Spain\\_between\\_Social\\_Inclusion\\_and\\_Migration.\\_Comparative\\_St.pdf](https://www.gitanos.org/upload/19/58/Roma_in_Romania__Bulgaria__Italy_and_Spain_between_Social_Inclusion_and_Migration._Comparative_St.pdf)
- Piore, M.J.(1979). *Birds of passage: Migrants Labor and Industrial Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Portes, A. & Borocz, J. (1989). Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives on Its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation. *International Migration Review*, 23, 606-630. DOI: 10.2307/2546431
- Rubio Martín, M.J. & Varas, J. (2011). *El análisis de la realidad en la intervención social: Métodos y técnicas de investigación* (4a ed.). Madrid: CCS.
- Stark, O.& Bloom, E.D. (1985). The New Economics of Labor Migration. *The American Economic Review*, 75, 173-178. Retrieved from: [http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/SummerSchool2013/readings/Kaczmarczyk\\_Reading%206.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/SummerSchool2013/readings/Kaczmarczyk_Reading%206.pdf)
- Tarnovschi, D. (2011). Dimensiuni importante ale incluziunii sociale. La populatia de romi din Romania. In D. Tarnovschi (Ed.), *Situatiaromilor in Romania, 2011. Intre incluziune sociala si migratie*, pp.36-42. Bucuresti: Soros Foundation. Retrieved from: [http://www.fundatia.ro/sites/default/files/Raport%20de%20tara\\_0.pdf](http://www.fundatia.ro/sites/default/files/Raport%20de%20tara_0.pdf)
- Tyldum, G. (2015). Life as a street worker in Scandinavia. In A.B. Djuve, F.J. Horgen, G. Tyldum, & H. Zhang, *When poverty meets affluence. Migrants from Romania on the streets of the Scandinavian capitals* (pp.89-95). Oslo: The Rockwool Foundation.
- Vlase, I. & Preoteasa, A.M (2012). Roma migrants from Bulgaria and Romania. Migration patterns and integration in Italy and Spain

2011. In D. Tarnovschi (Ed.), *Roma from Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain between Social Inclusion and Migration: comparative study* (pp.65-87). Bucharest: Soros Foundation Romania. Retrieved from: [https://www.gitanos.org/upload/19/58/Roma\\_in\\_Romania\\_\\_Bulgaria\\_\\_Italy\\_and\\_Spain\\_between\\_Social\\_Inclusion\\_and\\_Migration.\\_Comparative\\_St.pdf](https://www.gitanos.org/upload/19/58/Roma_in_Romania__Bulgaria__Italy_and_Spain_between_Social_Inclusion_and_Migration._Comparative_St.pdf)

Wiesbrock, A. (2011). The Integration of Immigrants in Sweden: a Model for the European Union? *International Migration*, 49, 48-66. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00662.

## ATTACHMENTS

### ATTACHEMENT NO.I

Survey carried out among Romanian Roma migrants, in Sweden, Stockholm



**SOS BARNBYAR  
SVERIGE**

**crossroads**

INFORMATION OCH STÖD  
FÖR UTLÄNDSKA EU-MIGRANTER

1. **Code:** \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ name and surname initials and date of birth (the year and the day)
  
2. **The date of the survey** (YYYY/MM/DD):\_ \_ \_ \_ \_
  
3. **Gender:**
  - a) Male
  - b) Female
  
4. **Do you have at least one child under 18 at home, in Romania?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  
5. **City/Country from Romania:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. **Do you know other people from the same city/country as you here?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  
7. **If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, how many people do you know?**

a) 1	c) 6-8
b) 2-5	d) up to 10
  
8. **Have you ever been in another EU country before coming to Sweden?**
  - a) Yes
  - b) No

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, how many countries have you been to?

- a) 1
- b) 2-4
- c) More than 4

Which countries? (Fill in only if you answered to question No.8.a)

\_\_\_\_\_

- 9. Is it your first time here in Sweden?** a) Yes b) No
- 10. Have you been up to a month in another city in Sweden?** a) Yes b) No
- 11. How long are you planning to stay in Sweden?**  
a) Over a month b) 1- 3 months c) 3-6 months  
d) 6-9 months e) Over 9 months f) Over one year
- 12. Are you thinking in coming back to Sweden after your next visit in Romania?**  
a) Yes b) Maybe  
c) No d) I do not know
- 13. Which activity have you earned money from last week?** (You can choose more than one)  
a) Infringing activities b) Undeclared work c) Collecting bottles/ cans  
d) Singing on the streets e) Begging f) Legal employment  
g) Other activity h) I have not earned money last week
- 14. What have you used the money you earned for?**  
a) Food/clothes for my family in Romania  
b) Buying/building a house in Romania  
c) Breakdowns/malfunions of the house in Romania  
d) Schooling costs  
e) Paying my return journey  
f) Paying fines  
g) Other
- 15. What is your current level of studies?** (Please choose the highest level of education you have)  
a) Without studies  
b) Primary school (1-4)

- c) Secondary school (5-8)
- d) High school (9-12)
- e) Professional training
- f) Faculty

**16. Can you read and write without any problem?** a) Yes b) No

**17. Have you ever had a formal job in Romania?** (With a contract)

a) Yes / Yes, but it was a temporary work /No, never

b) In which sector have you been working on? (Fill in only if you said "yes" to question 17.a)

\_Constructions´ sector      \_Farming      \_Handcrafting  
\_Street sealing      \_Forest work      \_Other\_\_\_\_\_

**18. What type of place do you have to live in Romania?**

- a) Tent
- b) Car/truck
- c) Caravan
- c) Rent house
- d) Own house
- e) Other place

**19. Are your children going to school in Romania?** A) Yes b) No

**20. Who is taking care of your children while you are here?**

- a) Mother/father      b) Parents/Parents in law      c) Sister/brother
- d) Aunt/uncle      e) Other relative \_\_\_\_\_      f) Friends/neighbors
- g) Other people      h) Nobody

**21. Are you concerned for your children while you are here in Sweden?**

a) \_Yes, every day/ \_Yes, once per week / \_Yes, once per month / \_No

b) Choose one of the following (Fill in only if you said "Yes" to question 21.a)

- a) Because they are living in dangerous situations/they can be sick
- b) Because they do not have food/clothes
- c) Because they are feeling abandoned for not being with them
- d) Because they are not going to school
- e) Other\_\_\_\_\_

ATTACHEMENT NO.II

Quantitative data obtained through the survey

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6
Age	35	38	27	32	38	40
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female
Know to read and/or write	No	No	No	No	A bit	A bit
Children at home	2	5	4	3	3	2
Time in Sweden (YY/MM)	1,3	2	2	2,5	2	1,5
Time in Italy (YY/MM)	1	5	4	3,5	3	3,5
Time in Spain (YY/MM)	3*	1*	4*	6*	8*	5*

\* months

Note: The time in Sweden accounts only for the last stay. It is not their first time in this Scandinavian country